

Credit: Lori Smith

How to Prepare Your Garden this Season

Lori Smith - Macomb County Advanced Master Gardener
& Yardeners of SCS



Roseville Public Library

April 11, 2024

About The Speaker

Credit: Lori Smith

- When we moved to St. Clair Shores in Nov. 1999, I only planted tomatoes & raspberries because we had a large swimming pool (removed 2014).
- Started raising monarch butterflies 12 years ago (2012).
- Since 2013, I have had a native plant garden area & I have stopped using pesticides.
- The native plants in my garden provide food (milkweed) and shelter for monarch caterpillars and butterflies and other plants for other types of butterflies & pollinators.
- June 2021, my husband built 6 raised garden beds for vegetable gardening.
- I use companion plant gardening to reduce insects that eat vegetable plants.

Prepare Your Garden With The Right Soil

- Get your soil tested and add nutrients in the fall for next year.
- You can add crushed eggshells to your soil to boost calcium for tomatoes, pepper plants, roses, hydrangeas, spider plants, ferns, & ivy plants.
- Be careful as adding too much of the eggshells can alter the pH, making it too alkaline.
- Banana peels soaked in water and using the water in your garden will give your soil natural potassium.

Credit: Lori Smith

Soil Testers Through MSU Shop

Credit: Lori Smith



Smart Gardening: Don't Guess - Soil Test!

Get Your Home Lawn and Garden Soil Test Today

Rebecca Finneran, Michigan State University Extension



Plant scientists know that lawn and garden plants require 18 nutrients for healthy, productive growth. Your lawn and garden "soil environment" is a reservoir that houses these nutrients, providing the platform for plant roots to acquire them. Understanding each individual plant's needs and the type of soil you have is the first step in properly managing soil fertility.

Often our lawn and garden soils are rich and productive, needing little or no enhancements. Others may be poor soils or depleted, needing to be replenished. Approaching plant care without conducting a baseline soil test may put gardeners at the risk of over fertilization. This can have negative effects on plant growth as well as creating nutrient imbalances in the soil.

Michigan State University Extension provides an easy-to-use soil test kit (homegilltest.msu.edu) that can be purchased online from the MSU Extension Bookstore (<https://shop.msu.edu/products/bulletin-e3154>) or from your local county MSU Extension office.

The **Home Lawn and Garden Soil Test Mailer** can be used to process any type of home soil sample, such as

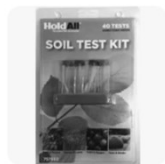


Why should I soil test?

- **Know your soil.** Soil testing is an important diagnostic tool to evaluate nutrient imbalances and understand plant growth.
- **Understand.** The most important reason to soil test is to have a basis for intelligent application of fertilizer and lime.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/soil-testing-returns-through-msu->

Soil Testers At Local Garden Centers



Lowe's Soil Test Kit
60183L
\$14.98

🛒 Lowe's, 2+
📍 3.8 mi · In stock
3.8 ★★★★★ (160)



Luster Leaf 1885
Digital 4-Way...
\$29.25

🛒 Amazon.com, 3+



4-in-1 Soil
Moisture Meter...
\$18.99

🛒 Walmart - Dongg...

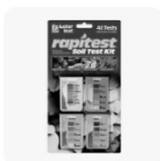


Sun Joe 3-in-1 Soil
Meter, Moisture,...
\$12.99

🛒 Tractor Supp..., 10+
4.5 ★★★★★ (13)



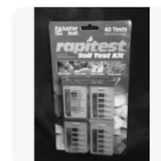
Burpee Electronic
Soil Tester
\$13.89



Luster Leaf
Rapitest Soil Test...
\$19.99



7-in-1 Soil Test Kit
Soil Moisture...
\$26.95



Rapitest Soil
Tester (40 tests)
\$19.75

Credit: Lori Smith

Prepare Your Garden With The Right Soil (Cont.)

- Do not use topsoil for your vegetable gardens, it does not add much nutritional value for your veggies & plants. I did use topsoil for years but not anymore.
- I am using organic soil with compost & worm castings.
- For raised beds, I suggest Compost Soil. You can get it delivered in bulk by Soulliere Landscaping Patio and Garden Center or Landscape Supply Yard or other garden centers. It is cheaper to order in bulk, if you have a large area or many raised beds to fill.
- Use natural wood chips not the colored dyed type because of the chemicals used on them, especially in your vegetable garden.

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Examples of Organic Soil Mix in Bags

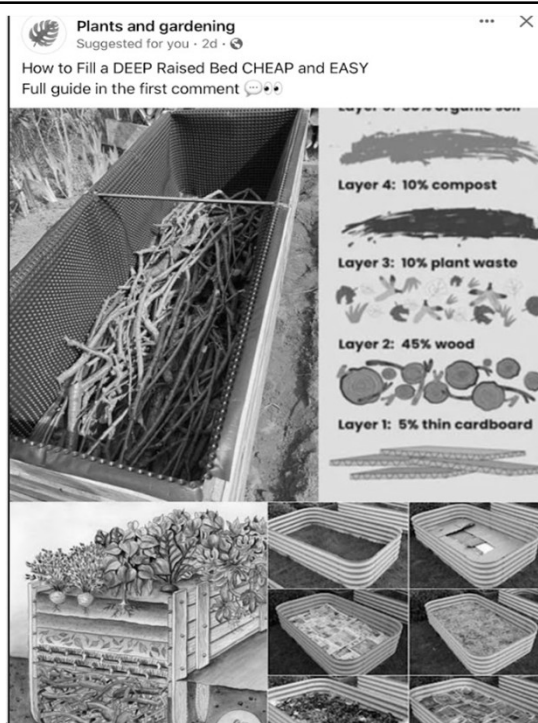


Credit: Lori Smith

Raised Garden Beds

- You don't want to fill the raised bed containers with *only* the Compost Soil.
- I put sticks in the bottom of my own raised bed boxes.
- We will discuss raised beds more in depth in the June session on Vegetables,

Credit: Lori Smith



Soulliere Landscaping Garden Center

Credit: Lori Smith



Soils

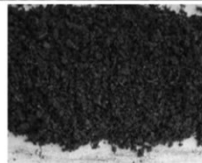
23919 Little Mack
St. Clair Shores, MI 48080
800 9 6 10 Mile
www.soulliergardens.com



Topsoil varies from load to load, it is a sandy loam soil brown in color. It does not have any nutritional value for your plants. It is used to build up around the house. Also available mixed with our rich black compost. One yard of topsoil is equivalent to 4-5 wheelbarrows full or 15 bushels. We do carry Garden magic topsoil in 40# bags. The bagged topsoil is a mixture of reed sedge peat and sand black in color.



Compost is a black rich composition of decomposed grass and leaves. It is heated up over 150° at this temperature all weed seed and pathogens are killed. It has the water retention capability of peat moss and the nutrient value of a good fertilizer. Excellent addition to the garden or anywhere you are going to plant. Available bulk and bagged.



Compost Manure is odorless and available in 40# bags only. It is made up of reed sedge and composted animal waste. Excellent addition to gardens adding organic matter.

Calculating Aids

Measuring for Soil

Measure the area needed to cover in square feet. Then determine the average depth you need to fill. Use the table below to find the number of yards needed.

Calculations are approximate, so usually it is best to order extra.

***adjust for compaction**

Sq. Feet Covered	2" deep	3" deep	4" deep	6" deep	9" deep	12" deep
200 sq ft	1 1/3 yards	2 yards	2 2/3 yards	4 yards	6 yards	8 yards
300 sq ft	2 yards	3 yards	4 yards	6 yards	9 yards	12 yards
400 sq ft	2 2/3 yards	4 yards	5 1/3 yards	8 yards	12 yards	16 yards
500 sq ft	3 1/3 yards	5 yards	6 2/3 yards	10 yards	15 yards	20 yards

<https://www.soulliergardens.com/bulk-materials>

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